



# Let's Go Seed Collecting!

Written by Neha Sumitran  
Illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan



**‘Let’s Go Seed Collecting!’** by Neha Sumitran

Illustrations: Archana Sreenivasan

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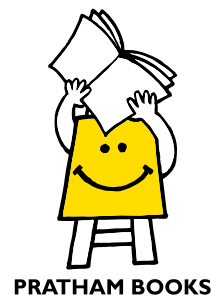
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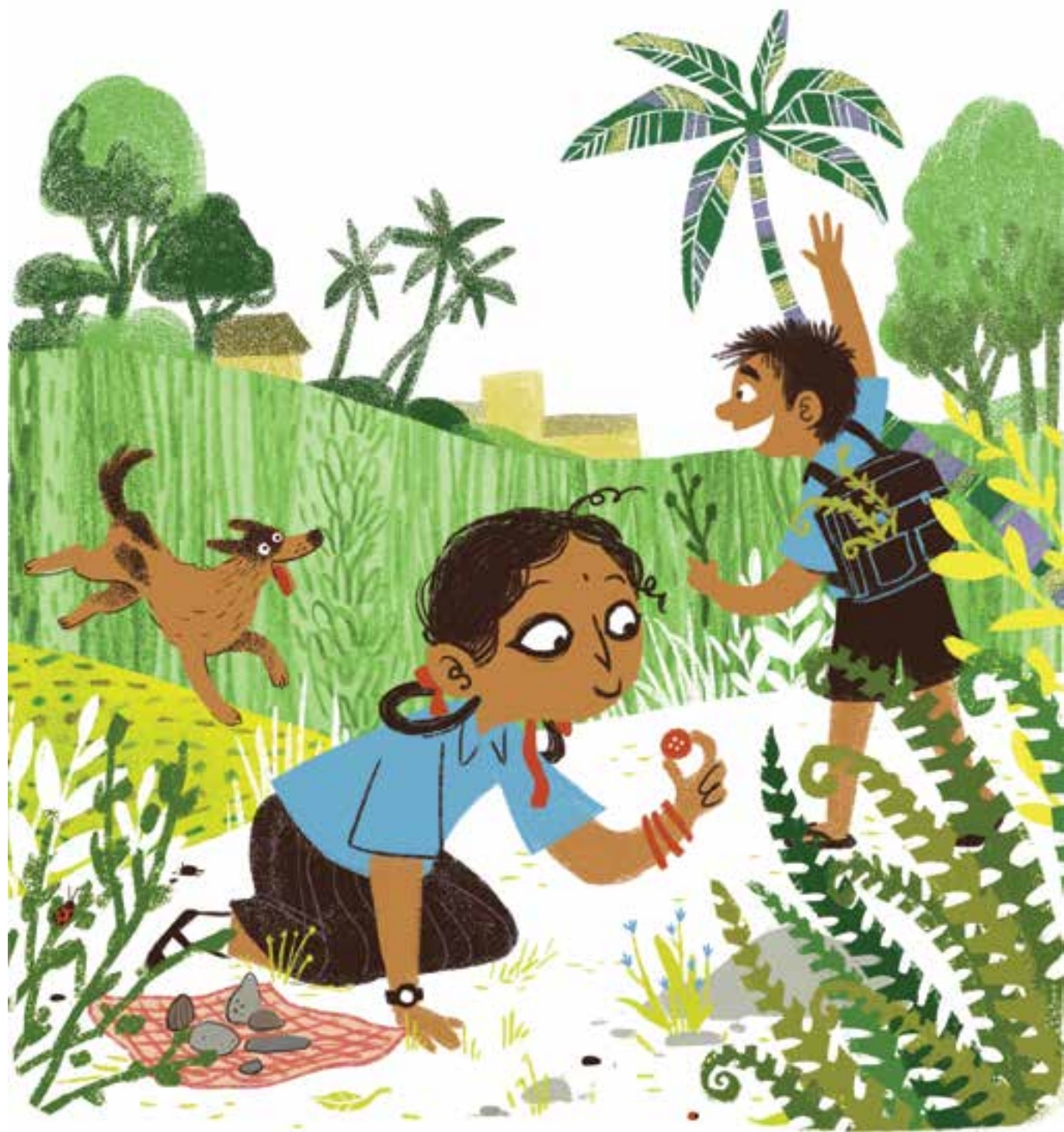





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Tooka and Poi love collecting things.  
Smooth pebbles from the riverside, twirly  
and tickly fern leaves, bright red buttons  
that have fallen from a school uniform –  
Tooka and Poi pick them all up. Every day,  
they meet after school, near the bendy  
coconut tree by the river, and wait for  
their best friend.

At five o’ clock on the dot, Inji arrives,  
huffing and puffing like an old school  
bus. Inji is a friendly dog with eyes the  
colour of chocolate and a tail that never  
stops wagging.



Together, Tooka, Poi and Inji walk, heads bent, scanning the gleaming road, the tufts of grass, and moss-covered rocks for interesting things to collect. Their favourite thing to collect is seeds!

Tooka and Poi collect shiny red seeds that look like ladybirds, spiky burrs that stick to their clothes, and the giant bean-shaped pods of the copper pod tree.





The pods make a delightful **tshh-tsh-tshh** sound when Tooka and Poi shake them about.

Poi loves to make up funny songs to go with the seed music.

*“Inji is the best of dogs,  
She likes big flowers and little frogs,  
And birds and seeds and ants and snails,  
But best of all, she loves her tail!”*

Over and over she sings these songs, making Tooka laugh and Inji bark happily.







Tooka, Poi and Inji are sitting by the tamarind tree. Tooka's favourite seeds are the pudgy pods from around this tree.

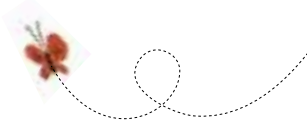

He loves to suck on its sour flesh until he gets to the shiny brown seeds inside. It makes Tooka's face scrunch up in funny ways, and the hair on the back of his neck stands up.







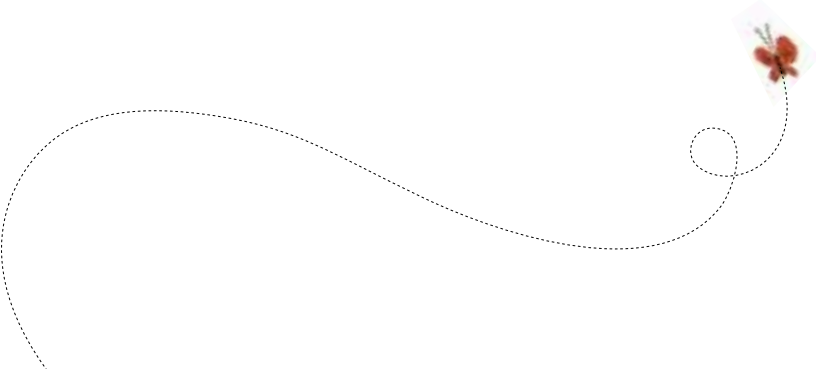





Suddenly they hear a small squeaky voice say “Hellllooooo”. Tooka and Poi look at each other, puzzled. They can’t see anybody.

“Up here! Up here!” they hear the voice say again.

Tooka and Poi look up and down, and all around, but there isn’t a person in sight.





“It’s me, Pacha. I’m the Tamarind Tree.”  
Inji barks loudly and wags her tail faster than normal. **Phat-phat-phat** it goes, back and forth.

“Why hello Inji,” Pacha the Tree says.  
“I haven’t seen you in days!”

Tooka and Poi become still as statues.  
Their eyes widen and their mouths freeze in big ‘O’ shapes.

Finally, Poi smiles shyly and says, “Hello Pacha the Tamarind Tree. It’s nice to meet you. I’m Poi!” Then she gives the tree a big hug.









Pacha giggles, “I’ve never been hugged by a little girl before! It feels tickly!”

“And we’ve never met a talking tree before!” Tooka says, cheerfully, “So this is an adventure for all of us.” Hearing this, Pacha laughs loudly, making the leaves on his branches glow a brighter green.

“What are you two up to today?” Pacha asks.

“We’re collecting things!” Tooka and Poi say.



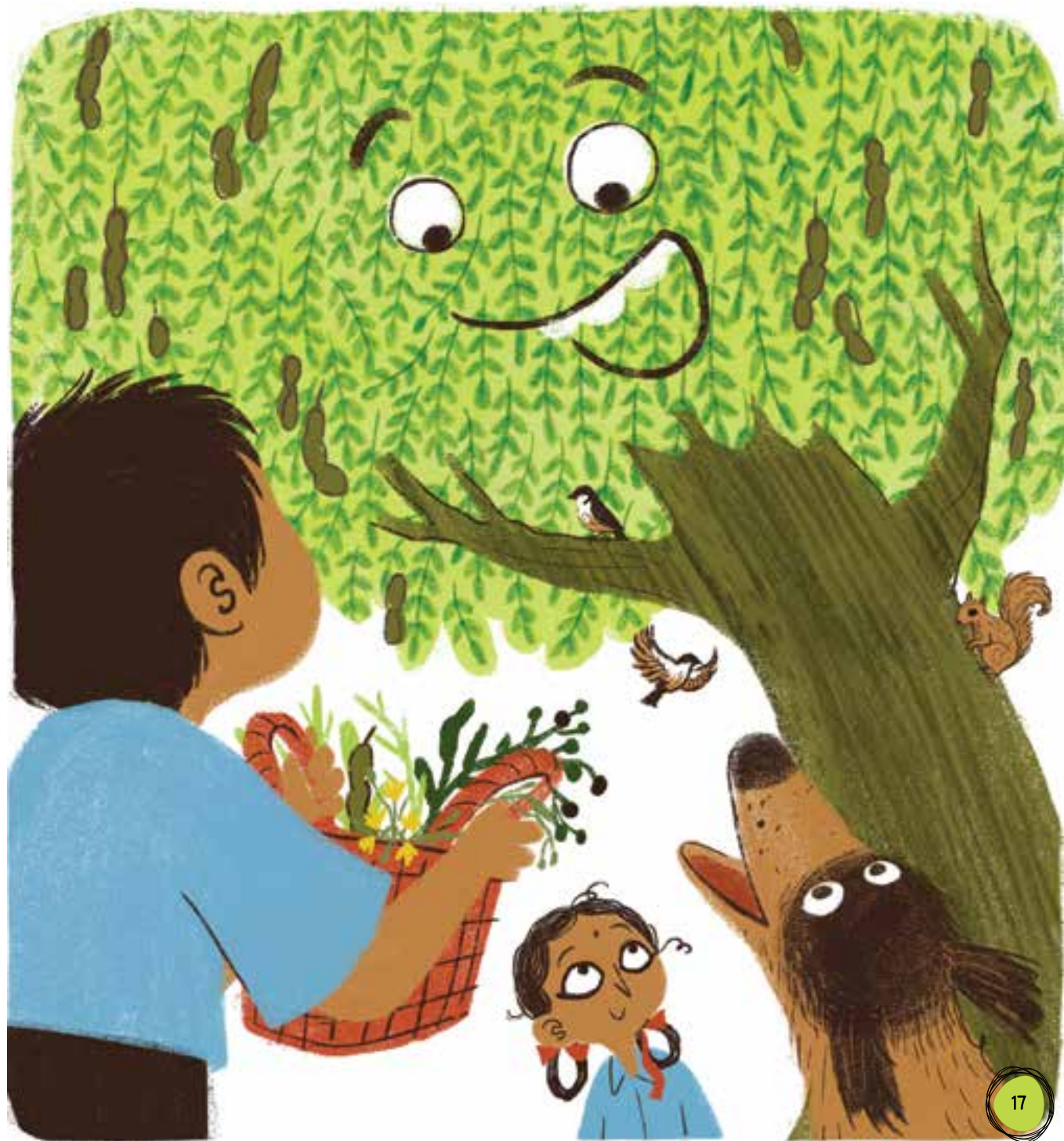
Tooka and Poi show Pacha the Tree their bag of flowers, pebbles, and sticky tamarind.

“How lovely that you’re collecting seeds!” Pacha says. “Do you know I came from one of those little tamarind seeds? And look at me now, all grown up with so many branches and a big family of sparrows and squirrels and crows living with me.”

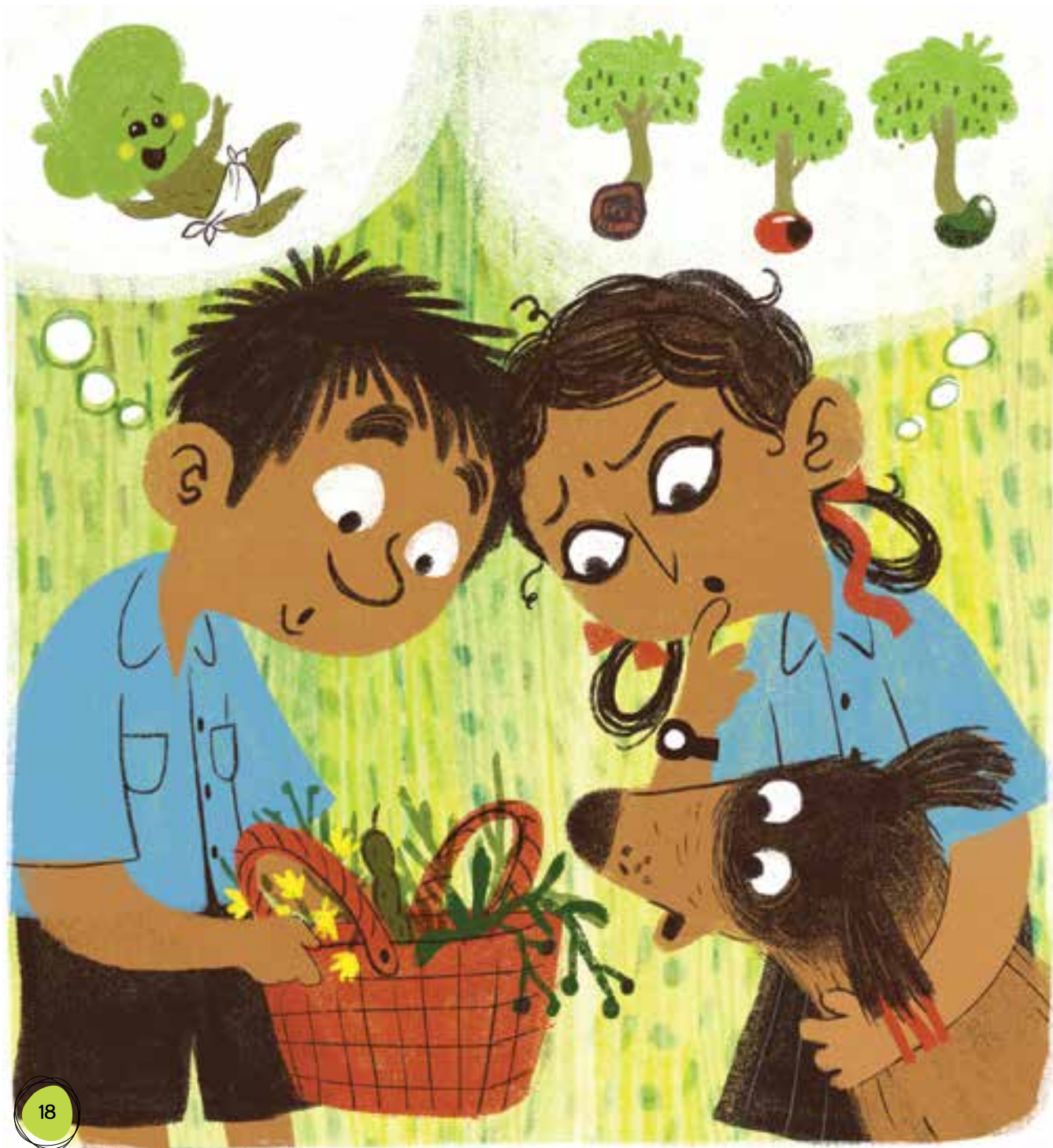
“What do you mean?” Tooka asks.

Inji barks enthusiastically. “Bow! Bow! Bow!” Inji said but Tooka is sure it sounds like “How? How? How?”











“Those seeds you’re collecting,” Pacha explains, “They’re all tree babies.”

“They are?” Poi asks, her eyebrows scrunched into squiggly black lines.

“Do all seeds grow into tamarind trees?” Poi asks, trying to remember how many seeds she has at home.

“Oh no!” Pacha replies. “Seeds grow into all sorts of things.”

“Do you have any fruit in your bag?” Pacha asks. Tooka nods and pulls out a small, red apple and a soggy banana.





“There you go!” Pacha says, excitedly.

“Now bite into the apple until you reach the centre. You’ll see little brown seeds sitting there.”

“They’re like shiny little bugs!” says Poi.

“Aren’t they pretty?” Pacha asks. “Those little seeds grow into apple trees.”

“Now break the banana in half and see what you find,” Pacha instructs.



“I see the seeds!” Tooka says excitedly.  
“They look like a sleeping millipede!”

“Seeds come in all shapes and sizes,”  
Pacha says while Inji gobbles the last  
of the apple.

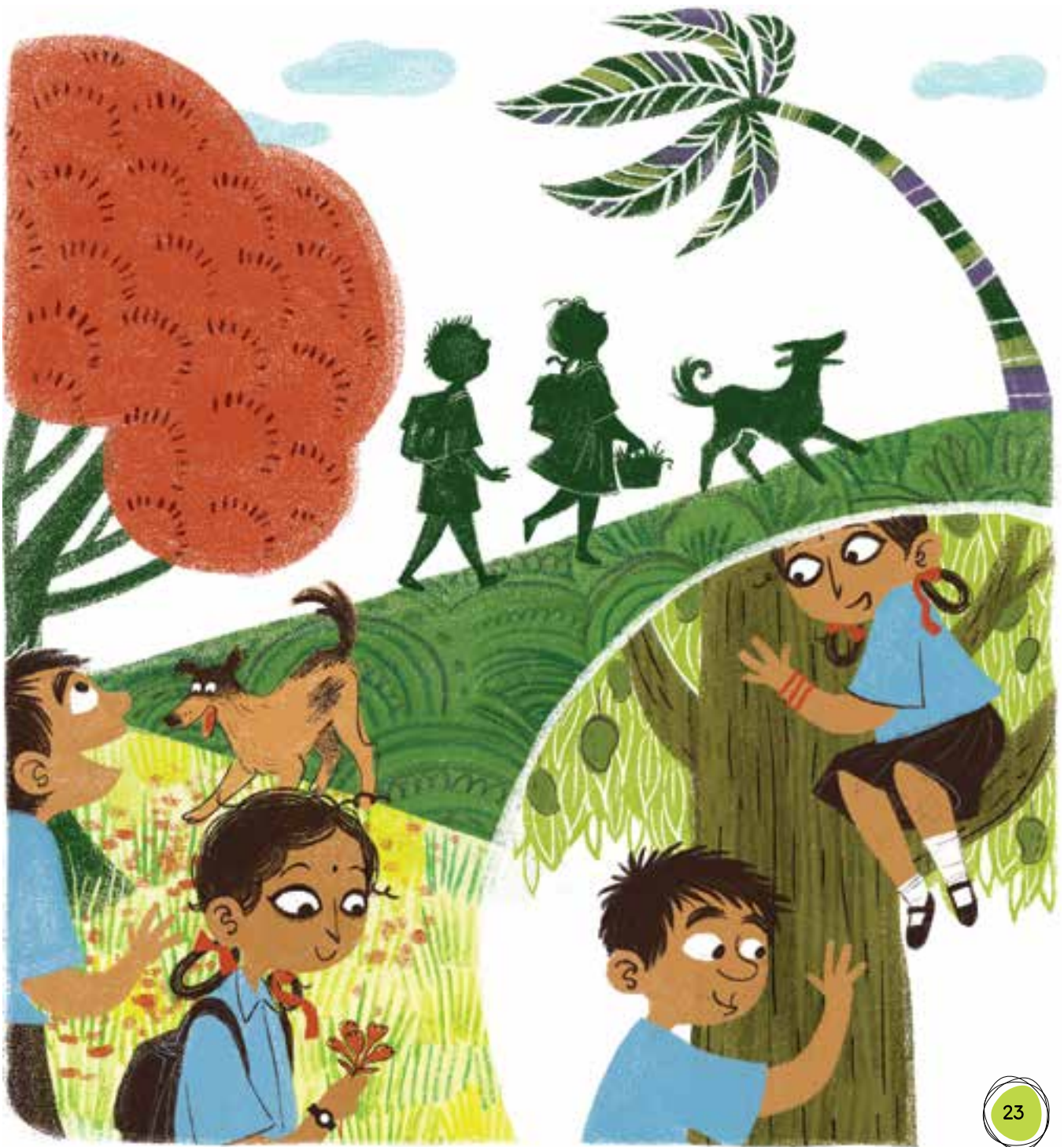
“Are they all tree babies?” Poi asks.

“Yes!” says Pacha. “And they all have a  
little plant inside, waiting to come out  
and see the world.”

As Tooka, Poi and Inji walk home that  
evening, they look closely at all the  
trees along the road.









How pretty the leaves of the coconut tree  
look as they dance in the wind.

How beautiful the red gulmohar flowers are  
against the bright blue sky.

How nice and rough the bark of the mango  
tree feels under their palms.

And how wonderful that something as big  
and important as a tree starts out as a  
teeny, weeny little seed.

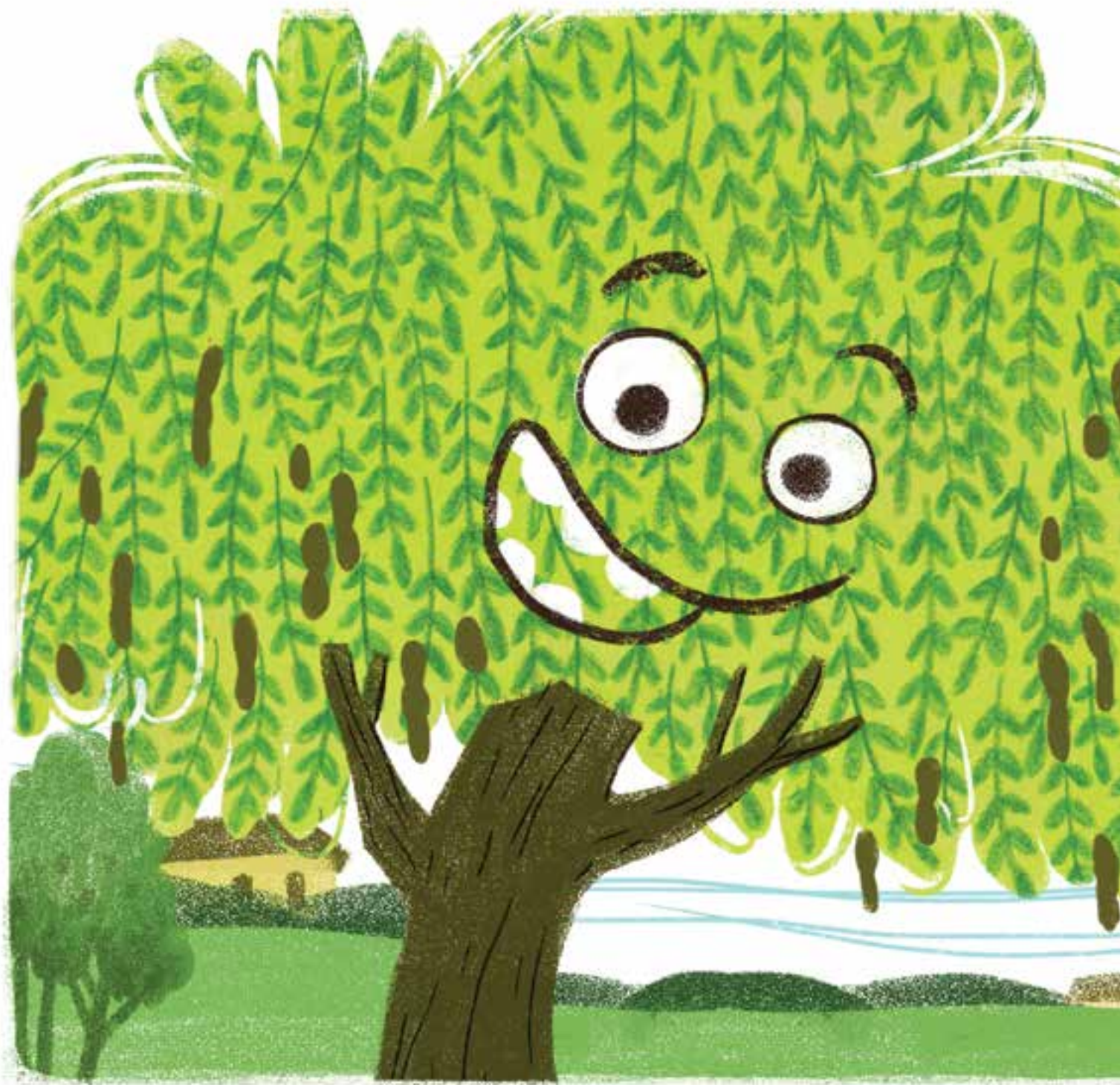


Tooka, Poi and Inji still meet every evening after school. But now, Tooka and Poi collect things in which they can plant the seeds they collect. Old shoes, empty coconut shells, even used plastic bottles – everything can be turned into pots.

And every once in a while, they stop by for a chat with Pacha the Tree.









## PACHA'S SUPER SEED GUIDE

Hello! I'm Pacha, the Tamarind Tree, but I go by all sorts of names. I'm called imli in Hindi, puli in Tamil, and tentul in Bengali. Scientists call me *Tamarindus indica*.

Let me introduce you to some of my seed friends. You may have seen them on your dinner plate.



### ***Molagu***

Common name: **Red chilli**

Scientists call me:

*Capsicum annum*

Chillies come in all shapes, sizes, and colours, and are grown all over the world. Its seeds are small, circular and flat, and add spice to dal and bhaji. Careful when you touch them, they'll make your fingers burn!



### ***Kaapi***

Common name: **Coffee**

Scientists call me:

*Coffeea Arabica*

You know the coffee your parents drink every morning? That comes from coffee berries. The seeds from the berries are dried, roasted, and then powdered. Coffee bushes grow best in hilly regions of South India.





### ***Chakka***

Common name: **Jackfruit**

Scientists call me:

*Artocarpus heterophyllus*

Berries, apples, bananas, watermelon, and jackfruit – all fruits have seeds in them. Some seeds we cannot eat, like that of the mango. Others, like the jackfruit, are used to make curries after they are soaked in water.



### ***Thenga***

Common name: **Coconut**

Scientists call me:

*Cocos Nucifera*

Nearly every part of the hard, brown coconut is useful to us. The hairy, hard outside part is used to make rope, the fleshy inside is used in food, and the coconut water is a delicious drink, especially when it's hot outside. And the oil that you put in your hair? That comes from the coconut too.



### ***Kappalandi***

Common name: **Peanut**

Scientists call me:

*Arachis hypogaea*

All plants love soil, but peanuts love the earth so much that they grow under ground. And that's why some people call them groundnuts. These little seeds are packed with goodness and are delicious when eaten raw, steamed or roasted.



### ***Choru***

Common name: **Ricea**

Scientists call me:

*Oryza sativa*

Rice is one of the most popular grains! It's eaten in more homes in India than any other seed I know. On the plant, rice actually has a rough, brown cover, like a jacket, which keeps the seed inside safe and sound.



## ***Chocolate***

Common name: **Chocolate**

Scientists call me:

*Theobroma cacao* (which means food of the gods)

Rice might be the most popular seed, but cacao is definitely the most loved seed of all – especially by Tooka and Poi. The cacao seed is where chocolate comes from.

Each cacao fruit has about 30–50 seeds that are roasted and then mixed with sugar and milk to make bars of delightful chocolate.







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Neha Sumitran is a perpetually hungry food and travel writer who lives in Mumbai but hopes to have a farm in the hills someday. She is currently the Editor on *National Geographic Traveller India Online*.

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Archana Sreenivasan is a freelance illustrator based in Bengaluru. Her illustrations have been published in magazines, children's books, book covers and comics. She finds the natural world and people-watching most inspiring and engaging.

**Join Tooka, Poi and their best friend Inji the dog as they go around collecting seeds. The adventure begins when the three friends meet Pacha the Tamarind Tree.**

**Learning to read – level by level. This is a Level 3 book.**

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